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ABSTRACT

Eight vocational adjustment coordinators from four Houston area school districts identified the educable mentally retarded (EMR) clients (16 to 19 years old) they predicted most likely (n=25) and least likely (n=25) to succeed in employment. Ss were individually administered L. Kohlberg's Test of Moral Reasoning (KMRT) and J. Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test of Ego Development (LEDT). The group predicted likely to succeed in employment scored higher on both the KMRT and LEDT than the group predicted unlikely to succeed. The groups did not show significant differences in age, ethnic groups, measured IQ, or sex. (SBH)

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Level of Moral Reasoning And Ego Development As Factors In Predicted Vocational Success With The Mentally Retarded

Susan J. Sheridan

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Our society is work-oriented. Wolfensberger (1967) states that

> ...the highest recognition is conferred not by appearance and stature, not by decent and tradition, and not by income and wealth, although all of these may play a role. The most significant status recognition comes from what one does or accomplishes in the way of work. (p. 233)

Even more basic than status recognition is the general way in which people are viewed by society. In a time of increasing concern over welfare costs, mentally retarded people able to work and provide for themselves will generally be thought of in a more positive way than those persons who must join the welfare rolls. As a working member of the community, the retarded person will be seen not as a burden upon society but instead as a contributing and productive member of that society. Frances P. Connor (1972) states that due to the rapid move from segregation of the retarded toward an appreciation of the variety of options open to them, "it becomes increasingly

clear that we must find means of predicting successful social and vocational adaption by the retarded". (p. iii)

In a review of the research concerning characteristics which discriminate between successful and non-successful employment of the mentally retarded, Kolstoe (1961) found that I.Q.s within the range of 40-80 are "sufficiently high not to interfere with the employment of the individual, provided job selection is carefully done." (p. 473) Kunce, Mahoney, Campbell, and Finley (1969) found that "I.Q., education and disability were not significantly related to obtaining a job." (p. 43) Research in vocational programs for the retarded has shown that the success of job placement for mentally retarded adults depends more upon social and emotional characteristics of the clients than upon their work skill development, their I.Q., or their education.

> Other variables that have looked promising in past studies (Kolstoe, 1961; Phelps, 1956; Shafter, 1957; and Warren, 1961) are those that reflect the old-fashioned personal-social virtues that can be publicly observed, such as obedience, grooming, punctuality, conformity with safety rules, completion of assigned tasks, etc. (Wolfensberger 1967, p. 247)

It is apparent that socially desirable behavior which "reflects the old-fashioned personal-social virtues" must be attained developmentally. The infant comes into the world acting in a self-centered manner and as he grows into toddlerhood he begins to become aware of himself in relation to others. Socially acceptable behavior develops only gradually as the child becomes aware of and indoctrinated into his particular society. Therefore, as the child grows in cognitive ability to understand the requirements of his society, he is more able to fit his social behavior to the requirements of those about him.

It appears that variables which seem necessary for successful employment of the retarded are obtained developmentally. Kohlberg's scale of moral reasoning points out developmental stages in the socialization process beginning with a punishment obedience orientation (Stage 1). In a Stage 1 orientation, a person defines the worth of an action by its physical consequences. An action is good if it avoids punishment and bad if it is punished. Punishment is looked upon as being severe, arbitrary and imminent. Avoidance of punishment is the guiding motive.

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Stage 3 is called Good Girl - Nice Boy Orientation. At Stage 3, subjects realize two interacting people are mutually aware of each other's point of view as well as their relationship. This ability seems especially important in an employee-employer relationship. The primary concern is approval by others in "pro-social" situations. Stage 3 is clearly differentiated from either of the two previous stages in that authorities are now seen as altruistic and wise people (especially employers, supervisors). One feels respect and affection for authority because it's best for all in the long run due to the benovolence and wisdom of the authority (employer).

The last three stages defined by Kohlberg, Stage 4 Law and Order Orientation, Stage 5 Social Contract and Social Unity and Stage 6, the Universal Ethical Principles were beyond the attainment of the subjects in this study due to the cognitive complexity necessary for reasoning at these stages of development.

Insomuch as Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test of Ego Development (LEDT) measures concepts which have also been shown to relate to success of mentally retarded adults in employment, i.e., impulse control, interpersonal relations and character development, the scale was used along with Kohlberg's Test of Moral Reasoning (KTMR) to determine if there was a relationship between ego level, moral reasoning level and predicted success in employment of mentally retarded individuals.

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Vocational Adjustment Coordinators from four Houston area school districes using their professional judgments, selected students they predicted to be the 25% of their educable mentally retarded case load most likely to succeed in employment at the time of testing. They also identified the 25% of their educable mentally retarded case load they predicted as least likely to succeed in employment at the time of testing. From a population of approximately 100 educable mentally retarded students a total of 50 subjects (25 predicted likely to succeed and 25 predicted unlikely to succeed) was tested.

Of those twenty-five subjects predicted likely to succeed in employment: fifteen were males, ten were females; thirteen were anglo, eight were black, and four were Spanish sur-named. Three subjects were children of welfare recipients, and twenty-two were children of families not recieving welfare. The chronological age range at the time of testing was from sixteen years three months to nineteen years two months with a mean chronological age of 17.4 years. The measured I.Q. range (Stanford-Binet and Wechsler Scales) was from 50-77 with a mean I.Q. of 66. The students had spent from one to ten years of their school careers in special education classes with a mean of 5.4 years in these classes.

Of those twenty-five subjects predicted unlikely to succeed in employment at the time of testing; twenty were males, five were females; eleven were anglo, eight were black, and six were Spanish sur-named; five were children of families receiving welfare, twenty were children of families not receiving welfare. The chronological age range at the time of testing was from sixteen years three months to nineteen years six months with a mean chronological age of 17.3 years.

The I.Q. range was from forty-eight to seventy-six with a mean I.Q. of 62. The students had spent from one to ten years of their school careers in special education classes with a mean of 6.08 years in these classes.

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Composition of Groups

	Predicted Success.	Predicted Unsuccessful
Mean Age	17.7	17.6
Mean I.Q.	66	62
Mean yrs. in Sp.Ed.	5.4	6.08
Females	10	5
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Kohlberg's Test of Moral Reasoning (KMRT) and Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test of Ego Development (LEDT) (forms AB 10 and 19-68) were administered orally to each subject, and recorded on cassette tapes. Twenty-eight Ss were tested at school during one of their regularly scheduled class periods. Twenty-two of the subjects were tested at their homes in the evenings or on weekends, because they were on job training during school hours.

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Results:

The group predicted likely to succeed in employment scored higher on both the KMRT and LEDT than the group predicted unlikely to succeed in employment.

The Chi-square test for two independent samples was used to test the hypothesis stated in the introduction. On the KMRT the Chi-square value of 8.22 with 1 degree of freedom was significant at the .01 level of confidence. On the LEDT, the Chi-square value of 10.47 with 2 degrees of freedom was significant at .01 level of confidence.

In analyzing the correlation of scores on the moral reasoning measure and the ego development measure, the phi coefficient was computed to be .67, significant at the .01 level of confidence.

An interesting finding regarding the correlation of moral reasoning and ego development scores was that the phi coefficient for the fifteen females' scores was .85 whereas the phi coefficient for the thirty-three males' scores was .58. This difference seems to show that the females tended to score consistently high on both measures (as defined in this sample), or consistently low on both measures. Although the females scores were more consistent across measures than the male scores, little else seems to have been affected by the sex of the subject. There

were proportionate numbers of males and females identified for each group and proportionate numbers of males and females scored at each stage of ego development and each moral reasoning stage. These results indicate that sex was not a factor influencing group placement, moral reasoning level or ego development level in this study.

Ethnic group did not seem to be a factor influencing either placement in groups or scores on the measures used in this study. The composition of each group was approximately 50% anglo, 30% black and 20% Spanish sur-named. The results of scores when analyzed according to ethnic group showed 50% of the anglo subjects scoring Stage 1 and 50% Stage 2 on KMRT; 44% of the black subjects scored Stage 1 and 56% scored Stage 2; 60% of the Spanish sur-named subjects scored Stage 1 and 40% scored Stage 2 on KMRT. Results are proportionately similar for LEDT.

I.Q. as measured by the Stanford-Binet or Wechsler Intelligence Scales seems to have had some influence on group composition. In the group predicted likely to succeed, 67% of the Ss had measured I.Q. scores in the 65-77 range (the upper half of this population) whereas in this same group only 33% of the Ss had measured I.Q. scores in the 48-64 range (the lower half of this population.) Of the

group predicted unlikely to succeed in employment 38% of the subjects had measured I.Q. scores in the upper half of the I Q. range whereas 62% of those in the group had I.Q. scores in the lower half of the I.Q. range. This was not statistically significant, however, the phi co-efficient relating I.Q. and group placement was .29 and was significant at the .10 level of confidence. Although measured I.Q. might have been related to group placement, it was not related to attained scores on the KMRT or the LEDT.

The age range in this study was from 16 years 1 month to 19 years 6 months at time of testing. Age was not a factor in group placement or in scores on either the KMRT or the LEDT.

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Discussion

The only variables which significantly differentiated the group predicted likely to succeed in employment from the group predicted unlikely to succeed in employment were the scores on KMRT and the scores on LEDT. It was an unexpected finding that the groups would score at Kohlberg's Stage 1 and 2 and Loevinger's I-2 and I-Δ instead of

Table 2

Kohlberg's Test of Moral Reasoning and Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test: Related Results

GROUP	Scores of KMRT		Scores on LEDT		
	100s	200s	I-2	I-Δ	I-$\Delta/3$
Females	53%	47%	47%	47%	6%
Males	49%	51%	51%	42%	7%
Anglo	50%	50%	45%	45%	10%
Black	44%	56%	44%	50%	6%
Spanish surnamed	60%	40%	70%	30%	
I.Q. 45-64 (lower half)	57%	43%	48%	48%	4%
I.Q. 65-77 (upper half)	44%	56%	55%	40%	5%
Youngest Ss	58%	42%	54%	42%	4%
Oldest Ss	42%	58%	46%	46%	8%

higher on the moral reasoning and ego development scales. One of the possible explanations for the scores being lower than had been expected might be found in the results of a study by Robert Borgman (1972) investigating maternal influence upon development of moral reasoning in retarded children. He found that maternal directiveness was significantly related to stiffling the child's maturity in moral reasoning.

The writer suggests that mothers or mothering figures of educable mentally retarded individuals are often very directive. Also teachers of students classified as educable mentally retarded are often very directive, telling students facts and having them memorize rules instead of finding reasons for the facts and rules.

Also Harvey, Hunt and Schroder in their 1961 book, Conceptual Systems and Personality Organization, propose that the training conditions, as perceived by the student, effect the nature and rate at which development occurs. These authors state that the training method which leads to arrestation of development in their Stage 1 (similar to Kohlberg's Stage 1 and Loevinger's I-2) is called reliable unilateral training. It is characterized by consistent imposition of source defined (either teacher or parent)

standards or absolute criterion. Unreliable unilateral training conditions lead to Stage II functioning (similar to Kohlberg's Stage 2 and Loevinger's I-Δ). Unreliable unilateral training may be characterized by inconsistent control and inconsistency in setting excessively high goals and at other times indifference. These training m methods are the methods as perceived by the trainee. It may not be the method actually used, but the characteristics of these methods are experienced by the student.

What is here suggested is that the limiting factors of development may be the results of the retarded individuals environment and training methods used in his home and school as much as in the abilities and potential of the retarded individuals. It is speculated that the aspect of Stage 2 and I-Δ reasoning used by the Ss in the group predicted likely to succeed in employment was self-protective in nature. Loevinger stresses that one aspect of Hedonistic thinking is self-protection. The conclusion drawn is that when mentally retarded employees function as employers state is most important, with the personal social characteristics which are central to those reasoning at Stage 3 and Level I-3, they do not necessarily reason at these levels. They may show behavioral characteristics of retarded employees

likely to succeed in employment but their reasons for behaving in this manner may be hedonistically oriented and self-protective in nature.

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Anglo	50%	50%	45%	45%	10%
Black	44%	56%	44%	50%	6%
Spanish surnamed	60%	40%	70%	30%	
I.Q. 45-64 (lower half)	57%	43%	48%	48%	4%
I.Q. 65-77 (upper half)	44%	56%	55%	40%	5%
Youngest Ss	58%	42%	54%	42%	4%
Oldest Ss	42%	58%	46%	46%	8%

higher on the moral reasoning and ego development scales. One of the possible explanations for the scores being lower than had been expected might be found in the results of a study by Robert Borgman (1972) investigating maternal influence upon development of moral reasoning in retarded children. He found that maternal directiveness was significantly related to stiffling the child's maturity in moral reasoning.

The writer suggests that mothers or mothering figures of educable mentally retarded individuals are often very directive. Also teachers of students classified as educable mentally retarded are often very directive, telling students facts and having them memorize rules instead of finding reasons for the facts and rules.

Also Harvey, Hunt and Schroder in their 1961 book, Conceptual Systems and Personality Organization, propose that the training conditions, as perceived by the student, effect the nature and rate at which development occurs. These authors state that the training method which leads to arrestation of development in their Stage 1 (similar to Kohlberg's Stage 1 and Loevinger's I-2) is called reliable unilateral training. It is characterized by consistent imposition of source defined (either teacher or parent)

standards or absolute criterion. Unreliable unilateral training conditions lead to Stage II functioning (similar to Kohlberg's Stage 2 and Loevinger's I-Δ). Unreliable unilateral training may be characterized by inconsistent control and inconsistency in setting excessively high goals and at other times indifference. These training m methods are the methods as perceived by the trainee. It may not be the method actually used, but the characteristics of these methods are experienced by the student.

What is here suggested is that the limiting factors of development may be the results of the retarded individuals environment and training methods used in his home and school as much as in the abilities and potential of the retarded individuals. It is speculated that the aspect of Stage 2 and I-Δ reasoning used by the Ss in the group predicted likely to succeed in employment was self-protective in nature. Loevinger stresses that one aspect of Hedonistic thinking is self-protection. The conclusion drawn is that when mentally retarded employees function as employers state is most important, with the personal social characteristics which are central to those reasoning at Stage 3 and Level I-3, they do not necessarily reason at these levels. They may show behavioral characteristics of retarded employees

likely to succeed in employment but their reasons for behaving in this manner may be hedonistically oriented and self-protective in nature.

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